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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2004

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER  
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION

#### HEADLINES

##### MASS APPEALS

Education reform duel between government, YOK - Aksam  
UN to discuss division in Cyprus - Milliyet  
Gen. Taguba reiterates systematic torture in Iraq - Sabah  
Bush loses support over torture photos - Aksam  
Bush losing support for backing Rumsfeld - Hurriyet  
Popular support for Bush falling - Turkiye  
Amnesty: UK troops killed 37 civilians in Iraq - Sabah  
Washington to impose sanctions on Syria - Aksam  
OECD predicts 5.2 percent growth for Turkey - Milliyet

##### OPINION MAKERS

Education bill shows AKP's 'twisted' view of democracy -  
Cumhuriyet  
EU warns against blocking reforms in Turkey - Yeni Safak  
Annan seeking two-state formula in Cyprus - Yeni Safak  
Al-Qaeda takes 'revenge of torture' - Radikal  
Al-Qaeda beheads American civilian - Zaman  
Support for Bush at lowest level - Yeni Safak  
One third of Americans approve torture in Iraq - Yeni Safak  
'Ordinary' day in Iraq: 5 killed - Cumhuriyet  
Blood and horror in Palestine - Radikal  
 Hamas kills 6 Israeli soldiers - Cumhuriyet  
Israel moves to get bodies of Israeli soldiers in Gaza -  
Zaman  
OECD report boosts morale in Turkey's economy - Yeni Safak

#### BRIEFING

Tension over education reform bill: The ruling AK Party (AKP) is determined to see through legislation aimed at reforming universities, despite strong criticism by the military that the bill is against Turkey's secular system. PM Erdogan said at his party group meeting on Tuesday that the government had been 'deceived' by university rectors during the negotiation process. Erdogan also tacitly criticized the military for pressuring parliament on the issue. Erdogan said the parliament will have the final word on the university reform bill. The president of YOK criticized Erdogan's statement, saying that a majority in parliament does not represent a majority of the nation. First Army Commander General Yasar Buyukanit said the TGS would evaluate the 'indirect reference' made by PM Erdogan to a the TGS statement issued last week. 'The TGS has made important assessments on this issue,' Buyukanit said, and warned the government to 'act accordingly.' Members of the Higher Education Board (YOK) visited the main opposition party CHP and said that religious vocational schools (Imam Hatip) should be shut down. The European Union representative in Turkey entered the debate as well, criticizing the military for involving itself in politics. EU Commission Ambassador Kretschmer called the military's statement 'a step backward' for Turkey. The education reform bill will be discussed in parliament on Wednesday. Once it is approved, it will be submitted to the president for signature. President Sezer is expected to veto the reform.

Cyprus: The British Commissioner in south Cyprus, Lynn

Parker, said after calling on `TRNC PM' Mehmet Ali Talat in Lefkosa that he would work with EU partners to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. On Tuesday, the EU Commission Representative in Ankara, Hans-Jorg Kretschmer, said Turkey would not be given a date for accession talks if Ankara does not recognize the Greek Cypriot state. Kretschmer also suggested that Ankara make at least a symbolic withdrawal of some Turkish troops from Cyprus before December. Ankara is reluctant to withdrawal troops, saying that such moves would mean rewarding the Greek Cypriots, who have rejected the UN-backed plan for the reunification of Cyprus.

Mistreatment of Iraqi captives: President Bush's popularity has fallen from 52 percent to 48 percent in the wake of disclosures about the mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners. The percentage of Americans supporting the war in Iraq has dropped to 44 percent from 73 percent a year ago. A letter circulated by the Kerry campaign calling for the resignation of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld has been signed by over 275,000 Americans during the past week. Turkish dailies and TV stations report the beheading of an American civilian in Iraq by Al-Qaeda militants in what was said to be revenge for the abuse of Iraqi prisoners. Americans have recently released half of the captives in Abu Ghraib prison. Almost 90 percent of Abu Ghraib inmates were arrested by mistake, according to an ICRC report presented to the US and UK administrations last February.

#### EDITORIAL OPINION:

- a) Iraq Prisoner Abuse
- b) Chechnya

#### "Criticism of US Mistakes in Iraq"

Cengiz Candar noted in the conservative-sensational DB Tercuman (5/12): "The US administration failed to place Iraq on the road to democracy. There has been a lack of effort to pave the way for democratic procedures, and a failure to share authority with the IGC. The US occupation force developed a representational body in Iraq - the IGC -- but in the course of time it did not take enough actions to prevent the IGC from weakening. When significant authority was not shared with the IGC, the council came to look more American than Iraqi. In the meantime, the whole process served to weaken America's hand. There were other inconsistencies along the way, such as failing to maintain a Sunni-Shiite balance. This created opportunities for Iran and Syria to exercise influence over Iraqi groups. Last but not least, the Abu Ghraib torture constitutes a very serious and possibly fatal blow against the moral image of the Bush administration."

#### "The US and its Lies"

Zafer Atay opined in the economic-political Dunya (5/12): "The lies began with WMD, when we realized that the fundamental arguments justifying the war were not true. Now we are witnessing the investigation of the Abu Ghraib case in Washington. The Bush administration refers to 'individual cases' and is trying to claim that the administration has nothing to do with the abuse and torture in Abu Ghraib. In fact, such abuses and torture cannot be the action of a couple of soldiers. It is a systematic policy with the involvement of the CIA and army intelligence. The claim that the administration did not know about the torture is another big lie because - as the New Yorker has reported -- Washington had known about the problem since last January. . It is interesting to see that despite all of these colossal lies, Rumsfeld is keeping his job and Bush is not withdrawing from the presidential race."

#### "The Caucasus in Turmoil"

Sami Kohen commented in the mass appeal Milliyet (5/12): "The assassination of pro-Russian President Ahmet Kadyrov in Chechnya has eradicated all hopes for peace in the region. The death of Kadyrov, who rebelled against Russian domination at the beginning but was elected president after making his peace with Moscow, increases the risks of chaos and civil war in Chechnya. While the violence continues in the country, the main concern is the course to be followed by Prime Minister Putin following this incident. It is obvious that it is not possible to suppress the violence with military power only. However, it is also clear that a solution to this complicated problem through political channels is very unlikely. In fact, the people of Chechnya are fed up with this situation. The incident in Grozni brings this drama to a more serious level."